

PRESS RELEASE

Good Urban Planning Benefits Economic Growth

Yangon, Myanmar, 31 January 2015



Yangon — The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and ERIA jointly hosted on 31 January a half-day capacity building seminar – ERIA Capacity Building Seminar on Urban Development Bridging Urban Development and Agriculture.

In his opening speech, H.E. U Ohn Than, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, said that urban development planning must incorporate agriculture as it would provide food security as well environment sustainability with the support from the local community, government, and the private sector.

As such, he pointed out that it is necessary to develop the capacity of all players from all sectors, including the support for those with patents and intellectual property rights, to encourage engagement with agricultural development in Myanmar.

Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura, Executive Director of ERIA, stressed that in the long run, creating good industrial networks and well-designed urbanization would contribute to Myanmar's economic development. He pointed out that the key challenge is reducing the damage to the environment and agriculture during the period of rapid industrialization.

In Session 1 – Linking Agriculture with Urbanization from the Planning Stage - Mr. Tetsushi Fujita, Director of Nikken Sekkei Civil Engineering Ltd., shared his company's vast experience in bridging the gap between urban and rural areas by designing integrated agricultural oriented areas in the urban-planning

For further information, please contact:

Mr. Sadami Sugimoto, Director, Public Relations, phone: +62-21-5797-4460, email: sadami.sugimoto@eria.org
Ms. Noviawaty, Assistant, phone: +62-21-5797-4460, ext. 312, email: noviawaty@eria.org

model. He emphasized that such an integrated design helps reduce poverty and improve food security in urban areas.

In response to Mr. Fujita, U Tin Htut Oo, Economic Advisor and Chairman, National Economic and Social Advisory Council Office of the President of Myanmar, said that the government has identified Yangon and Mandalay as the two urban areas to 'rurbanise,' the hybrid word combining 'urban' and 'rural.' He said urban and rural planning must be synchronized to promote the well-being of all inhabitants. He added that proper guidelines and regulations must come first before any design could proceed.

In Session 2 – Introduction to Wago En – Hirokazu Kiuchi, President of the Agriculture Producers Cooperative Corporation 'Wagoen' and Wago Co. Ltd., discussed the philosophy of his company in providing safe and clean vegetables for public consumption and recycling. He said his company keeps records of fertilization uses and planning to improve productivity and quality. 'This way, we can guarantee our food safety,' he added.

This 'ERIA Capacity Building Seminar on Urban Development Bridging Urban Development with Agriculture' is part of a year-long series to promote Myanmar's capacity to fulfill the objectives outlined by the ASEAN Economic Community blueprint.

More than 60 participants from concerned ministries, researchers, and the private sector attended the seminar.

What is ERIA?

ERIA is an international organization based in Jakarta. Since its founding in 2008, ERIA, through its research, supports the ASEAN economic integration process in ASEAN member countries. As the leading economic think tank in the Region and the Sherpa institution for the ASEAN Summit process (including the East Asia Summit), ERIA's research has influenced the policy-making process in the Region and has facilitated the goal of realizing an ASEAN Economic Community by 2015.

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